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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2034
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PA](#)
SUBJECT: PARAGUAY CALLS FOR CEASEFIRE IN GAZA

REF: A. 08 CARACAS 1784
[B](#). 08 BRASILIA 1685
[C](#). 08 LA PAZ 2671

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. Michael J. Fitzpatrick for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) The Paraguayan government issued a statement January 5 expressing "deep concern at the violence and instability in the Gaza Strip." The government urged parties involved to "immediately cease military action," and seek a peaceful solution through dialogue with strong respect for international humanitarian law and the United Nations' Charter. The Paraguayan government called on Israel to reopen its border crossings with Gaza to allow fuel and food supplies, medicine, and humanitarian assistance to enter Gaza, and permit medical evacuations. Paraguay called on the UN Security Council to consider urgent action, and expressed support for mediation efforts "by neighboring nations." (NOTE: The statement did not clarify what "urgent" action the UNSC should consider. END NOTE.)

[1](#)2. (U) Paraguay, as President pro tempore of MERCOSUR, also signed December 28 a joint MERCOSUR communique expressing concern over the situation in the Gaza Strip and rejecting the "escalation of violence and intimidation" there. The MERCOSUR statement also expressed regret over civilian deaths and injuries, and urged parties to cease hostilities and resume dialogue and negotiation.

[1](#)3. (C) COMMENT: The Paraguayan government remained relatively quiet on the issue of hostilities in the Gaza Strip until its January 5 declaration. Although Foreign Minister Alejandro Hamed Franco -- a former Ambassador to Lebanon known for his pro-Palestinian sympathies -- made comments December 21 and January 5 in support of the Palestinians, Paraguay's official statement strikes us as muted compared to Venezuela's and Bolivia's inflated rhetoric and far less critical than Brazil (refs A, B, and C). END COMMENT.

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FITZPATRICK